The Problem with NOT Pausing

By Judith Filek–President
Impact Communications, Inc.

Pausing is the most under-utilized tool that a speaker has. Most people who use the phone to conduct business only concern themselves with their message. For example, they want to explain a product, fix your software or update you on month-end results. They forget that how you say it matters. When a voice "sounds" great, the speaker is pausing a lot. If you aren't pausing, here are the risks you take.

- **People will ask you to repeat.** While you may want to move forward with your explanation, the person on the other end may interrupt you constantly to say "I didn't get that. Can you say it again?" It will derail even the most confident speaker.

- **Articulation will be affected.** When you aren't pausing enough, the lips, teeth and tongue aren't in the right position to say the words correctly. People may not understand you, particularly if English is their second language and if they can't see your facial expression. It is never a good thing if people mistakenly think you have said something other than what was intended.

- **Your ideas will not stand out.** Without pausing, thoughts blend together. Nothing seems important. Your great idea or solution will be overlooked, leaving you feeling defeated and perhaps, costing your company to lose money or miss an opportunity.

- **People will respond incorrectly.** When you ask a direct question, an individual who didn't hear all of what you said because your voice faded will respond the wrong way. If they are a subordinate, it will be embarrassing to them.

- **An accent won't be understood.** Some native languages, such as Spanish, are spoken at a much faster pace. However, if you have an accent, it will be difficult for others to grasp your meaning. Articulation will be affected, and words will not be said the way listeners learned them.

- **You will be perceived as lacking confidence.** Inevitably, filler or non-words appear when a speaker is not pausing at the end of sentences or thoughts. When there are a lot of "ums and ahs," the speaker will seem hesitant or unsure. People expect to talk to a subject matter expert. They do not want to waste their time with someone who doesn't seem to be confident.

- **People will be confused.** Pausing helps people to decide the right "bucket" in which to place your information. It helps them to follow your argument. If the speaker moves too quickly from point to point, listeners will be confused. Remember, a confused mind always says "NO."

- **Listeners will become annoyed.** They may feel you only want to get them off the phone and be done with them. They may ask to speak to someone other than you.

Pausing is a lifeline for your listeners. It is also a lifeline for you. It will help you to be more successful. When we really want someone to get it, we speak slowly. "I am lost. PAUSE. Where is the airport?" Help your listeners to get what you are saying by pausing often.

Question: *Do you speak too quickly? Do you enunciate well? What feedback have you received? How are you tackling this issue? We're interested in your reaction to this article. click here – to comment on this article, share your concerns or ask questions. Judy will respond to all questions.*

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their presentation and telephone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. *When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.*

Copyright © 2011
Impact Communications, Inc.
All Rights Reserved.